

FRONT PAGE

'Apartheid system' of programs blamed for native suicide pact

[The Globe and Mail](#)

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Mark Hume



Scott Clark, executive director of the Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society, blames native-only programs that isolate children for the crisis native kids face in the Grandview Woodlands community. (Rafal Gerszak for the globe and mail)

A "suicide pact" involving 30 youths arose in Vancouver's inner city largely because native children are segregated by racially selective social programs, aboriginal support workers say.

Although the native-only programs are designed to be culturally sensitive, they have ended up creating "social service ghettos," said Scott Clark, who works for an organization that supports native families in the urban core. Mr. Clark said news of the suicide pact first emerged on Facebook in September, triggering intervention by a special team involving police and government social workers, who swooped in to disrupt the group's plans.

"A number of front-line workers heard the rumblings ... and then the team came together and identified who those youth were and then brought 24 of them in for their own protection," he said.

Mr. Clark said all of the children brought in were natives living in the Grandview Woodlands area, but he didn't know any details about the others, or about how and when the pact was meant to have been concluded.

He said there have been five attempted suicides among youth since September in that community, but he didn't know whether any of them had been members of the pact.

He also said that 12- and 13-year-old native children have been binge drinking in Grandview Woodlands, which abuts the Downtown Eastside, and several have been hospitalized because of alcohol overdoses.

Mr. Clark, executive director of the Aboriginal Life In Vancouver Enhancement Society, said it is clear there is a crisis involving native children in the community and in other neighbourhoods. He blames the problem on social-service agencies that aren't co-ordinating efforts, and on government services that isolate children, by funnelling them into native-only programs.

"The government has instituted what is effectively an apartheid system," Mr. Clark said. "Perhaps with good intentions, B.C. government ministries have funded parallel aboriginal systems and organizations for education, child and family services. ... These types of programs have long been advocated to reflect cultural relevance for B.C.'s aboriginal peoples. However, what has evolved are systems where aboriginal people are pressured and often mandated to use aboriginal designated programs and organizations."

Ernie Crey, an adviser to the Sto:lo Tribal Council, agreed. "The fault lines in this unworkable and collapsing model of community services has found expression in last summer's suicide pact and many troubling incidents involving youth that have followed thereafter," he said.

Ambrose Williams, an aboriginal youth leader with Mr. Clark's organization, said he often hears from young people that they don't like being pushed into programs that are for natives only. "We don't like being separated into aboriginal organizations," he said.

In a letter to Mr. Clark last week, Children and Family Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux said she has asked staff from her ministry and the Vancouver Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society to review the September response to the suicide pact.

"We can learn valuable lessons in terms of early responses, including collaborative opportunities, that may have been missed," she said, while praising government, health and police authorities for their prompt action.

B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, was not available for comment Tuesday. But earlier this month she released a report on youth at risk of suicide, which identified a lack of stable living arrangements, domestic violence, mental-health issues, substance abuse and romantic conflict as common factors in 89 youth suicide and self-harm incidents. Ms. Turpel-Lafond also noted "a significant over-representation of aboriginal children and youth," with 58 per cent of the incidents

involving natives.

For The Wild Ones

Defenders of Wildlife (Blog)

Posted on 29 November 2012

Suzanne Stone, Northern Rockies Representative



Defenders of Wildlife long ago recognized the importance of tribal wildlife programs to a vast number of species across the country, including salmon, grizzly, bison, black-footed ferret and more. In the West, more than [55 million acres](#) are held in trust for tribal reservations, and even more are dedicated as ceded lands, which are held or managed by treaty. When combined with federal lands managed by agencies such as the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, [these lands](#) represent the majority of wildlife habitat in the western United States. But beyond providing significant habitat for wildlife, tribal leaders and scientists have assisted with the restoration of imperiled native species, including the return of wolves to the northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest.

In 1995, when the state of Idaho refused to participate in the restoration of wolves to the region, the Nez Perce tribe offered to take their place. The tribe entered a contract agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and assisted with the reintroduction efforts, then monitored wolf restoration for the next decade. Horace Axtell, now 87 years old and a venerated World War II veteran, is a spiritual leader of the tribe. He and other tribal elders conducted a ceremonial blessing for the wolves before they were set free to repopulate the state. [Click here](#) to listen to Horace share the stories passed down from his grandmother, who remembered the bond that the tribe held with wolves before they were eradicated from the region.

Jaime Pinkham, Nez Perce leader and former Defenders of Wildlife board member, explains that the Nez Perce shared a similar fate to wolves as both were driven from their homelands in the region. Wolves, [he explains](#), are a "kind of mirror for Indian people. When the non-Indian settled the West, there were obstacles. The Nez Perce people were one of them: They got in the way, and they were removed. The gray wolf suffered a similar fate. Now, man and animal are each struggling to regain their rightful place." Nez Perce schoolchildren [named one of the reintroduced wolves](#) "Chat Chaaht," which means "older brother." Chat Chaaht became an alpha male of his pack and [lived to be 13 years of age](#) — one of the oldest documented wolves in the region.

With the help of the Nez Perce and other tribes, wolves are regaining range across much of their historic homeland. Before federal protections were removed from wolves in Idaho, the state's restored wolf population peaked at nearly 1,000 wolves. Wolves dispersing from Idaho have also now returned to other parts of their traditional homeland in Oregon and Washington. One adventurous, wide-ranging wolf dubbed

"Journey" (also known as OR7) is now the first documented wolf to return to California since the early 20th century.



Wolf pups spotted on Umatilla land.

As wolves disperse, they are being aided and monitored by tribal wildlife officials. This summer, I was thrilled to hear that the Umatilla tribe in northeastern Oregon had documented the return of the first wolves to their land. The tribal wildlife managers had helped develop the Oregon Wolf Conservation Plan and had waited a long time for wolves to make it back to their homeland.

Defenders assisted the tribe with monitoring cameras, and tried to ease the transition with area livestock owners by offering our expert information on nonlethal measures to help wolves avoid conflict with livestock. Carl Scheeler, Umatilla biologist and tribal liaison for the Oregon Wolf management team, said that as wolf range expands in the state, there are still some groups that demonize wolves, while others welcome their return.

"Currently, we're looking at wolves through a magnifying glass. Every single depredation is elevated in the public eye. Every time a sheep dies by a wolf it makes front page news, but cougars, bears and coyotes still represent the vast majority of depredation losses." Like the Umatilla elders, he values their return, not just in a cultural sense, but in an ecological way as well. "I believe wolves fill an apex predatory role in the ecosystem," [he says](#).

In Washington, more tribal governments are taking an active role in wolf conservation as new packs become established in the state. Among the newest is the Colville nation, which [has named its first reestablished pack "Nc'in,"](#) the Okanogan word for wolf. While the tribe has some concerns regarding competition for elk and deer, a main source of sustenance for their community, they are willing to share their land with wolves and welcome their return. Just this fall, Colville tribal biologists [documented another new pack](#), now the ninth documented pack in the state, and named it the Strawberries pack.



High school students perform the Quileute "wolf dance" when an ambassador wolf visits from Mission: Wolf.

Another tribe associated with wolves in Washington is the Quileute Nation, made famous by the popular series *Twilight*. Like other tribes, the Quileute still have a long and rich cultural tie to wolves, despite the fact that no wolves have yet been restored to their historical coastal range in the Olympic

Peninsula west of Seattle. The Quileute celebrate their long-held connection with wolves through special dance and stories, which they often share with visitors. Last year, Defenders helped arrange for the Quileute people to meet ambassador wolves from [Mission: Wolf](#), and study the wolves' movements to help with their dance techniques. The [tribal gathering](#) included the youngest to eldest tribal members, and was a memorable, heartfelt celebration. It is our hope that someday wild wolves will regain

their homeland in the Olympic range and fulfill their historic role, not only as a native cultural icon, but as an important carnivore in this spectacular and rich ecosystem.

I've had the honor to work with tribal leaders from across our region, and their wisdom guides much of our work today. Perhaps a quote from Chief Dan George of the Tsleil-waututh Nation in Burrard Inlet, British Columbia best sums it up: "If you talk to the animals, they will talk with you and you will know each other. If you do not talk to them, you will not know them, and what you do not know you will fear. What one fears, one destroys." Our goal in promoting [coexistence](#) with wolves is to help people better know and understand wolves as a valuable species, and not one they should fear.

B.C. First Nation members evict pipeline surveyors, set up road block

[The Canadian Press](#)

Thursday, Nov. 22 2012, 2:26 AM EST



Chief Na'Moks of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, left, Chief Martin Louie of Nadleh Whut'en, centre, and Chief Jackie Thomas of the Saik'az nation attended the Enbridge Inc. annual general meeting for shareholders in Toronto May 9, 2012 to express their opposition to the Northern Gateway pipeline. (MARK BLINCH /MARK BLINCH/REUTERS)

Members of a First Nation in northern British Columbia have evicted

surveyors working on a natural gas pipeline project from their territory, seized equipment and set up a roadblock against all pipeline activity.

A group identifying itself as the Unis'tot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation said surveyors for Apache Canada's Pacific Trails Pipeline were trespassing.

"The Unis'tot'en clan has been dead-set against all pipelines slated to cross through their territories, which include PTP (Pacific Trails Pipeline), Enbridge's Northern Gateway and many others," Freda Huson, a spokesperson for the group, said in a statement.

"As a result of the unsanctioned PTP work in the Unist'ot'en yintah, the road leading into the territory has been closed to all industry activities until further notice."

Ms. Huson was not available for further comment.

But according to [a statement issued by the group](#) Wednesday night, the surveyors were denied access to the territory Wednesday morning at a bridge crossing the Morice River, which runs through the Skeena region.

The group said once the surveyors were turned back, members retrieved materials that had been left behind Tuesday.

That equipment will be held until the company agrees to open up "appropriate lines of communication," said the group.

Company spokesman Paul Wyke confirmed that surveyors were asked to leave the area.

"We had some surveyors in the area last evening and they were asked to leave traditional territory by a small group of members from the Unis'tot'en, and they complied," Mr. Wyke said.

"We understand that there are some members of the Unis'tot'en that have expressed some concerns with the proposed PTP project, and we continue to consult with First Nations along the entire proposed pipeline right-of-way."

Mr. Wyke said the company will continue ongoing consultations with aboriginal groups. The project has the support of 15 of 16 aboriginal groups along the route, he said.

The blockading group said the province does not have the right to approve development on their traditional lands, which lie northwest of Kitimat, the future home of an Apache Canada liquefied natural gas plant and the tanker port for the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

Officials with the Wet'suwet'en, a First Nation comprised of five clans – none of which is identified as the Unis'tot'en on their official website – did not return calls seeking comment.

The Wet'suwet'en have issued statements opposing the pipeline but discussions continue with the company.

British Columbia has become a battleground between oil and gas development and the rights of First Nations.

Many aboriginal groups whose traditional territories stand between the booming Alberta oil sands and ports that could take their product to Asia view court-recognized rights as a trump card to development projects.

The proposed Northern Gateway project, which would deliver diluted bitumen from the Alberta oil sands to a tanker port in Kitimat, has taken the brunt of opposition, but critics of oil sands development and tanker activity off the B.C. coast are widening the scope of their dissent.

A proposal by Kinder Morgan to twin an existing oil pipeline from Alberta to the Vancouver area is also attracting opposition as the project moves toward a formal application.

The \$1-billion Pacific Trails Pipeline would deliver natural gas from northern B.C. and Alberta to the LNG terminal for shipment overseas.

The pipeline, owned by Apache Corp., Encana and EOG Resources, passed an environmental assessment in 2008. Construction was slated to begin this year and the pipeline is expected to be operational in 2015.

Harper government replaces aboriginal art on \$20 bill

[Moncton Free Press](#)

Sat Nov 24, 2012 8:48AM GMT



Canada's government has released a new 20-dollar bill, but not without controversy. Hitherto Canada's 20-dollar bill had aboriginal art on it, to draw

attention to the importance of indigenous peoples. But in the new edition, the aboriginal art has been replaced with a symbol of a war memorial. Critics accuse Stephen Harper's government of promoting colonialism abroad, and at the same time refusing to provide ample recognition to Canada's victims of colonization at home.

The presence of a piece of aboriginal art entitled "the spirit of Haida Gwaii" on Canada's \$20 bill was viewed by many aboriginals as a form of recognition of their integral role in Canadian society.

But this week the Harper government released its new \$20 bill which conspicuously replaces the aboriginal emblem with a depiction of a World War I memorial.

Analysts say that the replacement of an aboriginal motif on Canada's money with one linked to Canada's military history is indicative of the Harper government's impulse to celebrate militarism and downplay the importance of Canada's indigenous peoples.

Analysts observe that the juxtaposition of Canada's Queen with aboriginal art on the old \$20 Bill symbolized the Crown-Aboriginal Treaties which nominally recognize certain aboriginal rights and entitlements. Aboriginal experts accuse the Harper government of disrespecting Crown-Aboriginal treaties by encouraging resource companies to despoil the abundant resources in aboriginal territories.

The Harper government's choice to emphasize war on its new \$20 bill only confirms in the minds of many aboriginal peoples that Canada remains an imperialist nation.

Society 'will feel impact' of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

[CBC News](#)

Posted: Nov 29, 2012 10:33 AM ET



Justice Murray Sinclair was one of the keynote speakers at the fetal alcohol spectrum disorder conference held in Sudbury this week. Hilary Duff/CBC

A First Nations leader said fetal alcohol spectrum disorder — also known as FASD — is an "alarming" problem amongst Canada's Aboriginal population.

The chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was in Sudbury Wednesday for a conference on the subject.

Justice Murray Sinclair says the prevalence of FASD in Aboriginal children can be linked back to the stresses and trauma caused by the residential school system in Canada.

"Clearly it relates to the question of alcohol consumption and alcoholism, both of which are outcomes to individuals having lived a life where they have to resort to alcohol where, in this case, they've been carrying a child," Murray Sinclair said.

Sinclair said the prevalence of FASD in Aboriginal children often results in legal or child welfare issues later in life.

If the number of Aboriginal children with the disorder continues to increase, all of society will feel the impact of "issues of impulse control [and] behavioral issues," Sinclair said.

"Ultimately [there will be] interventions by state authorities such as child welfare agencies when the child is still young — or even youth criminal justice systems or adult criminal justice systems."

Sinclair said a formal study is needed to determine the exact per cent of the population affected by the disorder.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

American architect will design future Inuit Art and Learning Centre in Winnipeg

[Nunatsiaq News](#)

November 23, 2012 - 2:51 pm



This previous design by Michael Maltzan for a building in Los Angeles gives a hint of what his concept for the future \$45-million Inuit Art and Learning Centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery could look like. (IMAGE COURTESY OF MALTZAN.COM)

An award-winning American architect Michael Maltzan will design the Inuit Art and Learning Centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the gallery announced Nov. 22.

The Winnipeg Art Gallery, which bills itself as “the home of the largest Inuit art collection in the universe,” plans to build a new \$45-million Inuit art and learning centre, which will cover 40,000 square feet over three floors.

The centre will be located at the south end of the gallery’s triangular property, bordered by Memorial Blvd., St. Mary Ave. and Colony St. in downtown Winnipeg.

This past August, 65 architectural teams from 15 countries responded to the gallery’s [call for expressions of Interest for its project](#).

In September, the architect selection committee narrowed it down to six finalists who submitted expanded proposals and were interviewed last month.

The selection committee and was unanimous in choosing Maltzan as the winning architect, and this recommendation subsequently received overwhelming approval from the gallery’s board, a gallery news release said.

When finished, the centre will house the gallery’s collection of contemporary Inuit art, “the largest of its kind in the world,” and the studio art and learning programs.

The [website for Maltzan’s Los Angeles-based firm](#) shows it’s designed a wide range of arts, educational, commercial, institutional, civic, and residential buildings.

OPINION

Time to take Action: The cycle of First Nations despair must be broken

QMI Agency

First posted: Sunday, November 25, 2012 08:00 PM EST

Peter Worthington



Leo Baskatawang holds up a tattered copy of the Indian Act that is chained to his waist, by the side of the highway in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. on Friday, Aug. 10, 2012. Baskatawang is leading a group of marchers from Vancouver to Ottawa to protest what he sees as a lack of direct representation for aboriginal people in the federal government. (MICHAEL PURVIS/QMI AGENCY)

Rob Clarke's credentials for wanting the Indian Act Amended are unique and persuasive: He's an Indian, born and raised under the Indian Act, was an RCMP officer for 18 years, and since 2008 he's been a Conservative MP.

More than most, he knows what he's talking about.

His 18 years in the RCMP were mostly in Saskatchewan, working with First Nations, where his background as a Muskeg Lake Cree enabled him to identify with many local problems.

And his Private Member's Bill to amend the archaic Indian Act (which became "law" 136 years ago), has the support of the PM and deserves to be passed.

In an article in the National Post, Clarke outlined aspects of the Indian Act that he wants repealed — such things as the minister of Aboriginal Affairs being required to authenticate and approve any will drawn up by a native person living under the act.

As Clarke puts it: "I was born under the Indian Act, have lived under it — and will not only die under it, but it will follow me into the grave."

It doesn't take much imagination to see the absurdity of the Act.

Also the minister rules on the validity of bylaws proposed by various bands, and sets rules on produce grown on reserves, and to whom they can be sold.

These ancient restrictions are paternalistic and unnecessary.

Clarke thinks band councils "should instead function like any rural municipality" and not have to await decisions made in Ottawa. Reasonable and realistic.

In fact, until something is done to make Indian reserves function like any rural community, and as long as individuals are paid money to stay on reserves, the inhabitants of reserves will be viewed second-class — be they citizens or not.

Right now, some \$10 billion is funneled into Indian Affairs, to be distributed to some 3,000 reserves (CBC figures) in which 500,000 people live. Government money traditionally goes to local chiefs to distribute.

Dismay broke out in Canada when the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) revealed that 50 chiefs on various reserves paid themselves more than the \$317,000 annual salary that the prime minister gets.

And 160 chiefs on reserves paid themselves more than their respective provincial premiers got in annual salaries.

One councilor in a band of 304 people in Nova Scotia paid himself \$978,468.

Clearly something is flawed, especially when conditions on some reserves are deplorable.

But there are exceptions. In 2009, the Tsawwassen reserve of Salish people in B.C. signed a treaty declaring self-government, and quit the reserve system.

They inherited other problems and responsibilities, and gained respect and self-pride.

Although an estimated \$100 million in expenditures was needed to make the community self-sufficient, Chief Kim Baird told the CBC that \$9 million in federal infrastructure funds helped.

Today, Tsawwassen is no longer a "reserve," but part of Metro Vancouver, 40 km to the north.

Chief Baird told the CBC: "One of the big surprises to me is the fact that everyone recognizes us as another government now.

"Before we were constantly asserting it, but no one treated us that way ... and that's really, really changed the dynamics in any number of situations."

Becoming a self-governing community has made Chief Baird aware of the failings of the Indian Act that encourages dependency and self-doubt.

Ron Clarke is on the right track, but he can't do it alone — and probably dares not be as venturesome as Chief Kim Baird on the Salish coast.

Hopefully, it is the future.